

THE
HISTORY
OF THE
LIFE and DEATH
Of that most Noble Knight
Sir BEVIS,
OF
SOUTHAMPTON.

Containing,

His Acts of Chivalry in various Battles,
and in slaying Giants, Monsters, Wild
Beasts, &c.



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(2)
The Famous History of
Sir Bevis of Southampton.



C H A P. I.

The Birth of Bevis, and the Death of his
Father.

IN the reign of Edgar King of England there was a most renowned Knight, whose name was Sir Guy, Earl of Southampton ; in his youth he betook himself to travel, and in his way fought and conquered all the enemies of the Christian Religion. Upon his return he began to think of a wife, and the King of Scotland having a fair daughter, Sir Guy made suit to her ; but Sir Murdure, the Emperor of Almain's brother, was a suitor to her also, whom she liked better than Sir Guy ; but the King her father knowing Sir Guy to be a peer of England, he gave his daughter to him in marriage ; and he brought her in great pomp to England.

In about ten months time she was delivered of a son ; notwithstanding which her ~~ve~~ still clove to Sir Murdure, and she basely contrived a scheme to have him murdered, and so possess Sir Murdure. Calling to her a servant whom she could trust, she sent him to Almain, bidding him tell Sir Murdure to come and meet her husband in her forest on the first of May, and there kill him, for he was hateful to her ; and then come and enjoy her as the reward of his labour. The servant promising to deliver this message, departed.—On the first of May she feigned herself sick, and desired Sir George to go to the forest and kill a buck for her to eat ; he thinking no harm, went, where he met Sir Murdure and his companions.—Thou traitor said Sir Murdure, I will now kill thee and thy son, and take thy lady, for she is mine. At this Sir Guy rode with such violence against Sir Murdure, as threw him from his saddle ; who thinking he should be slain, called out to his followers for help, who presently come up and fell on Sir Guy, swearing he should lose his life ; but Sir Guy said he would be content to lose it, provided it was in single

combat with Sir Murdure : this they denied, presently flew him, cut off his head, and carried it to his Lady ; who received it joyfully, and gave the messenger a great reward. This treachery being thus accomplished, Sir Murdure made haste unto the castle of Sir Guy, and was royally received there by his lady ; where for a while I shall leave him in feasting and pleasure, and speak something about young Bevis.



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C H A P. II.

Bevis keeps Sheep; his Uncle Sabere's
Contrivances to save his Life; and his
Attempts of Revenge for his Father's
cruel Death.

BEVIS hearing how basely his father was murdered, vowed to revenge it if ever he came of age, which being spoke in the hearing of his mother, she gave him a box on the ear, that felled him to the ground. Sir Sabre, brother to Sir Guy seeing his nephew so misused, snatched him up, and carried him away; when soon after his mother sent desiring his uncle privately to murder him; to this he seemingly consented, and dressed Bevis in a shepherds habit, and sent him to keep sheep; whilst he killed a kid, and dipped the boys garments in its blood, sending them to his mother, as a token of his being killed.

Bevis as he was watching his sheep on the hill, heard the rejoicings at court; which so enraged him, that he ran with

his shepherd's crook to the castle gate, and knocking, was denied enterance by the porter, on which he up with his crook and fell'd him to the earth; then into the hall he goes, and with one blow knock-ed Sir Murdure under the table, and would have sent his mother after his father, had not nature forbid him; then clearing his way through all the Knights made his escape, hiding himself in a near chamber. His mother taking Sir Sabra aside, said, Villain, did you not say you had slain him? If thou dost not, it shall cost thee thy life as well as his. Bevis hearing this, rushed upon his mother, and would have torn her to pieces, had not Sir Sabre rescued her out of his hand. Then she desired him to throw Bevis into the sea, and drown him; which he, to pacify her wrath, consented to.





C H A P. III.

Bevis is sold and carried over Sea to Armony, where he is presented to King Ermine.



GOing to the sea-side they met with the merchant of Armony, unto whom Sir Sabra sold Bevis. They soon arrived in Armony, and presented Bevis unto their King, who swore by his God, Mahound he never saw such a sweet fac'd boy in his life. After questioning him about his birth and parentage, offered him his daughter Josian and the kingdom after his decease, if he would renounce his own

God, and embrace his : but this he refused, saying, No interest should make him deny his God. This refusal made Jofian sorrowful, for she had fallen in love with him ; however, the King made him his chamberlain, and there was none so much in favour as Bevis in the whole kingdom.

It chanced on a Christmas-Day that Bevis rode into the field for recreation, and meeting threescore Saracens, they asked him if he knew what day it was ? No, said he. Then replied they tauntingly, It is the day thy God was born ; and wilt thou not honour thy God upon his birth-day ?—Upon this he drew his sword and made such havock amongst them, that in a short time they all lay dead at his feet.

This coming to the King's ears he said he should die ; but Jofian falling on her knees, begged his life ; which the King after much entreaty granted ; and Jofian went and kissed Bevis, dressing and healing his wounds ; so that in a little time he became as stout as ever.



C H A P. IV.

Bevis kills a mighty Boar in the Forest.

WITHIN that county was a great forest, in which was a wild boar that destroyed men women, and children; with this monster Bevis resolved to have a combat, and taking a sword and a spear to the forest he goes, where meeting with the boar, after a long and fierce fight, he run his sword down his throat, and so killed him; when cutting off his head, and placing it upon the point of his spear, returned homewards. In his way he was set upon by twelve foresters, who wanted to take away the boar's head from him that they might have the honour of the victory; but he laid about them with such fury, that he soon killed nine, and the other three fled; so he proceeded to the court, amidst the joyful acclamations of many spectators; and presenting it to the king, he thanked him, promising to do him great honour,

C H A P.



C H A P. V.

Bevis is made a Knight and General of
Twenty Thousand Men, to go against
Brandmond.

ABout this time Brandmond sent to
King Ermine to demand Josian to
wife, or he would beat him out of his
country. This alarmed Ermine, who cal-
led a council, wherein it was determined
that twenty thousand men should be rai-
sed, and the command given to Bevis,
who being sent for, and acquainted with
it, he agreed, and being made a Knight
and General of the army, he departed.

Brandmond seeing Bevis's small army,
laughed at them, but soon turned his
tone, for the battle beginning, Bevis's ar-
my behaved so gallantly, that they threw
the other into confusion, and put them to
the rout. In the midst of the battle Bevis
and Brandmond met, when after a fierce
combat the latter was taken prisoner, and
the day ended in a compleat victory
over the army of Brandmond.

Bevis returning, was received with joy and gladness ; and now Josian broke her mind to him, and made known her love : but he refused, on account of her being a Heathenels ; but she assuring him that rather than lose his love she would turn Christian, he was so overjoyed that he took her in his arms and kissed her.

This interview and resolution being told to the King, he was much enraged thereat, and wrote letters to Brandemond (who had paid his ransom, and was gone home again) to put Bevis to death ; and sent them with himself.





CHAP. VI.

Bevis's Journey, and the Effects of it.

THEN Bevis taking his leave departed, and in his way seeing the Heathens sacrifice to their Gods; went up to one of their altars, and said, What devil do you serve here? On this they fell on him, and he fought so valiantly that he soon killed two hundred Saracens; but being overpowered, he was brought before the king, to whom he bowed and gave his letters. — On reading them, he was struck with amazement at the ingratitude of Ermine, whom he had delivered from destruction; but finding his case to be desperate, he snatched up a sword and made great havock among them, till the multitude rushed on him, binding both his hands, so that he could not stir. He was then sentenced to be cast into a dungeon, and devoured by two dragons. In the dungeon he found a truncheon, with which he slew them both, and so remained at rest for a while.



C H A P, VII.

Some farther Account of Bevis,

Josian often enquired of her father where Bevis was, who told her he was Bone into his own country.—At this time came King Jour, entreating to wed Josian, the which he soon obtained of her father, who also gave him Bevis's steed Arundel, and his sword Morgla; all of which was without Josian's consent.

Now all this time Bevis was in prison, and his keepers must needs go see him :



as he had been there seven years, and fed only on bread and water; yet he was so

strong that he killed them, took the steed and got away clear. He was soon followed by Sir Grandere on his steed Troughcheffe, who overtaking him, Bevis turned round and clove Grandere's head asunder, and mounting on his steed was obliged to swim over a river to avoid the pursuit of the Saracens. Travelling till he was ready to faint, he at last saw a castle, where a giant lived that was Sir Grandere's brother he knocked at the gate, and out came the giant, who said, How now fellow; how cam'st thou by thy brother's steed? Why, said Bevis, I have sent him to sup with the devil, and will send thee after him presently. Wilt thou so, said he; and he up'd with his iron bar, and aimed a blow at Bevis, which narrowly missed him and beat out Troughcheffe's brains: Bevis leaped out of the saddle, and laid on the Giant, and after a few blows severed his head from his body; then he went into the castle and refreshed himself, after which he took a good horse, and rode away in search of Josian.

On his way he met with a palmer, of whom he enquired to whom yonder castle belonged? — There dwelleth, quoth the

palmer, King Jour, that married the lady
Jofian ;—and is the queen living, said he
Yes, said the palmer. — I will give thee
my steed for thy weed, said he. — With
all my heart replied the palmer; then he
leaped off his back, and put on the pal-
mer's weed, then took his way to the
castle. At first she did not know him, but
Arundel his steed hearing his master's



voice, neighed, and broke seven chains for
joy. By this she knew him, and took him
into the garden, where they concluded to
depart from King Jour; to effect which
Bevis went to the King, telling him he
came from Jewry, and that King Brack-
win was besieged by the King of Syrack,

and begged his assistance ; upon which he raised an army, and went to the help of his brother, leaving Sir Grassy to rule in his stead. — King Jour being gone, they gave Sir Grassy a sleepy drink that made him like one that was dead for thirtyfour hours ; in the mean time Bevis, Josin and her servant Boniface secured a good store of treasure, and came away for England. As they travelled they were so hard pursued by Sir Grassy, that they were obliged to put into a cave for shelter. While Bevis was abroad there came two lions, who



killed and eat Boniface, but meddled not with Josin. When Bevis returned, she told him what had happened, who said, he knew by that escape she was a maid ; but the lions coming again, Bevis slew them both ; after which they refreshed

themselves, and pursued their journey.—

As they went on, they met Ascapart, a Giant, who was thirty feet in length, and a foot between the eye-brows ; he bid them stand, saying, You and the Lady must go along with me. We will have a trial for that said Bevis ; so to it they went, and the giant at last cried out for mercy, promising if he would spare his life, he would be his servant for ever ; which Josian requesting, he complied with, and took him along with them.—

Coming to the sea side they found many ships bound to Christendom, but the Saracens would not ferry them to the ships ; then said Ascapart, I will carry you to the ship, horse and all ; so he took the horse under his arm, with Bevis and Josian, and waded to the ship, and sailed to the land of Colen, where dwelt a bishop that was Bevis's kinsman, who made them welcome ; and here Josian was publickly christened, but Ascapart would not.



C H A P. VIII.

Bevis slays a dreadful Dragon.

BEvis being in bed, heard a Knight cry I rot, I rot; at which sad noise he wondered, and asked in the morning what was the cause of it?—He was a Knight, said they, that was coming through the streel, when a dragon met him, and threw her venom upon him, [of which he rotted and died. — Where is the dragon, said Bevis?—Not far from this place, said they. Then Bevis called Ascapart to go with him who was very willing; so going together, when they came near the place, the dragon yelled dreadfully, which so frightened Ascapart, that he ran back again; but Bevis kept on, and the dragon coming towards him, he made a blow at her, which she returned, beating him to the ground, and he tumbled into a well. It seems the well was Holy Wateter, and no venom could come within seven feet of it: then drinking of the water he went to the dragon again, and charged him fore; on which she belched a geat deal of venom

upon him, which laid him dead on the ground, and burst his armour in pieces; the dragon seeing him lay so still, turned him over with her tail, and tumbled him into the well again; the water of which a second time expelled the venom, and made him safe and sound again. The third time he attacked her with redoubled valour, and making her give ground, she lifted up her wings, and he ran his sword under them, and pierced her to the heart; when she sent forth a hideous yell, and died. He then cut off its head, and put it on the point of his spear, bringing it



home in triumph to the bishop's palace; where there was great joy and feasting on the occasion.

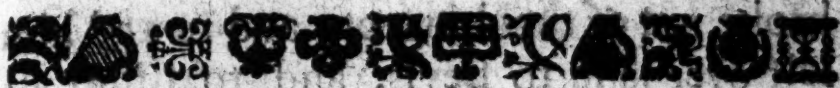
C H A P.



C H A P. IX.

Bevis raises an Army against Sir Murdure.

BEvis now began to think of ending his travels, and with a thousand of the bishops men sailed to England, and going to Sir Murdure and his Lady at Southampton, told him he was come from Almain to assist him and Sir Sabre in the present wars; but had brought no arms, as knowing he had plenty. This pleased Sir Murdure, who soon equipped them, and heartily thanked Bevis, who took upon him the name of Gerrard. At supper says Sir Murdure, this castle once belonged to a young knight, who having wantonly spent what his father had left him, sold it to me, and is since gone beyond sea.—The next day Bevis and his men took their leave of Sir Murdure and his Lady, and proceeded to the Isle of White, where Sir Sabre lived.



C H A P. X.

Josian married against her Will, her
Stratagem and Deliverance.

Josian continued all this while in Colen with the giant Ascapart. In that place lived the Earl of Mile, who loved Josian, but she would not yield to his will, and he feared to force her because of Ascapart; however, he wrote to her feigned letters from Bevis, which she received joyfully, and sent an answer by Ascapart, whom the Earl caused to be taken and cast into a dungeon. Then he went to Josian and told her what he had done, who rather than be ravished, the next day married him. At night when she went to-bed she made a noose, and as he sat by the bed-side she slipped it over his head, strangled him, and hung him over a beam. In the morning when his friends came to give him joy, Josian said, look there he hangs; at which they were amazed, and took Josian and carried her to a stake to be burned. — In the mean time Ascapart had

broke out of the dungeon, and rowed himself over land to Bevis, and told him all that happened ; who were both just returned as Josian was carrying to the stake, where they fought courageously, and soon carried her off in triumph. They then all three came to Sir Sabre's, where they were nobly entertained.



C H A P. XI.

Sir Murdure and his Lady's desired End.
Josian married and delivered of Twins
Bevis's and her Death.

BEvis then sent to Sir Murdure, letting him know who he was, thanking him for his armour, and bid him prepare for battle ; so Sir Murdure came with his army to the Isle of Wight, where Bevis met him, and between them was a bloody battle ; Sir Sabre, Bevis, and Ascapar made great havock, that they slew all that came near them ; and Ascapart took Sir Murdure to the castle, and put him into a cauldron of boiling pitch and brimstone ; which his lady seeing, threw herself down from the castle and broke her neck.

Bevis now married Josian, and going to do homage to King Edward, was by him joyfully received, and made Lord Marshal of England. But here an event happened which blasted their happiness for the King's son wanting to buy Bevis's horse Arundel, he would not sell it; upon which the Prince would have it by force, and going into the stable it kicked out his brains. The king hearing this was wrath with Bevis, vowing he should die; but at last it was concluded he should be banished: so Bevis surrendered his estate to Sir Sabre, and took with him Josian, Terry, and Ascapart. In their way Josian fell in labour, and bid them walk aside while she was delivered; so Terry and Bevis went together, and when she was delivered, Ascapart came and carried her away. When Bevis and Terry returned they found two children, but the mother gone; upon which Terry pursued Ascapart, overtook him, fought him and slew him, and returned back with Josian, to the great joy of Bevis. — Soon after a war broke out between Jour king of Mambland, and Ermine king of Armony, for Josian's sake; whereupon Bevis went to

the aid of Ermine, and tooh king Jour
prisonor; for whole ransom he had twen-
ty ton of gold, and three hundred white
steed:

The two children of which Josian was
delivered, Bevis named Miles and Guy;
who grew up and was as valiant as their
father, fighting many battles with him;
in all which they discovered their courage
and merit. — King Edward dying, Bevis
and his family came to their own castle at
Southampton; which Sir Sabre chearfully
resigned up to him; and after living some
years in peace and happiness with Josian,
both he and she sickened in one day and
died, and were interred in one grave;
over which their son Guy raised a stately
monument to the everlasting memory of
so gallant a knight, and his most royal
constant lady.

So I conclude the famous acts here pen'd,
For Time and Death brings all Things to
an end.

F I N I S .